

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS EXISTING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

Superstitious belief refers to one kind of belief which is not justified by reason, scientific attitude or evidence. Superstitious belief is nothing but the belief in something blindly without any verification (Kalita 2016). Even today, that we can predict most of events and happenings, and consider them from a scientific point of view, there are still some people who believe in the superstitious beliefs remaining from their ancestors and transfer these beliefs using the process of cultural acceptance and socialization to their children. For this purpose, the true understanding of this issue can be very useful for the process of socialization (Safaei and Khodabakhshi, 2012).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

In this research paper, an attempt had been made to study the attitude towards superstition existing among on-campus students of Sibsagar College, Joysagar and distance learners studying in the study center of Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University (KKHOSU) of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, Assam, India.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In this present study, incidental sampling technique was used to select the students of the institution. Total 398 students were selected for the present study (167 students were selected from KKHOSU study center of Sibsagar College, Joysagar and 231 students were selected from the same college who are receiving education in regular mode).

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

A Self-made questionnaire and interview schedule was prepared by the researcher, to collect the necessary information regarding superstitious beliefs.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study were not satisfactory. A significant difference was observed between students, studying under distance mode and the students studying under conventional mode. Moreover, it was found that, superstitious beliefs still exist among the students.

KEYWORDS: *Superstitious Beliefs, Distance Learning, Gender Wise, Area Wise, & Caste Wise Comparison*

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INTRODUCTION

India is the home to many superstitions. Many people have the nature to stick to their own ideas and beliefs, which they feel is correct. If we notice our Indian society, many people are still suffering from false beliefs. India, with a tradition of skepticism and a heavy baggage of superstitions and religious dogmatism demand

scientific temper (Chowdhury, 2013). Certain hours and days are considered inauspicious. People consult astrologers and priests, to know the auspicious hours and days to start their work, projects and journey. Likewise, the time and date of marriage, inauguration and foundation-laying ceremonies are fixed according to the advice of astrologers and the position of the planets and stars. A cat crossing one's path, the sight of a Brahmin, a sneeze or when someone interrupts or calls while one is going out etc. are all considered to be bad signs. The shooting of an owl and the howling of a dog are signs of death and danger. Contracting chickenpox is the anger of a goddess. So, the goddess is appeased with offerings. When people build a new house or if it is a beautiful house, they hang an earthen pot with an ugly face painted on it on the facade of their house. Owners of new vehicles hang women's braids at the back of their vehicles towards off evil eyes. Superstitions are typically seen as inconsequential creation of irrational minds. Nevertheless, many people rely on superstitious thoughts and practices in their daily routines to gain good luck. To date, little is known about the consequences and potential benefits of such consequences (Damisch et. al. 2010)

Many researchers did researches on false beliefs. Significant quantitative differences and a few qualitative differences were found, in the incidence of false beliefs between the white and coloured children, studying in secondary grades (Keurst, 1939). There is an existence of superstition and belief in human behavior (Beck and Forstmeier, 2005). It was found that, those who hold positive attitude towards witchcraft have higher intention to pay a visit, to a witchcraft themed destination (Zhang, 2012).

There are different psychological factors like fear, locus of control, confidence level etc. and social factors, such as socio-economic status etc. that influence the superstitious beliefs of an individual. (Shrivastav and Kotnala, 2015). R, Harish (2016) in his study, identified some common superstitious beliefs in society. These are –

- Divination, astrology and prediction.
- Caught ghosts
- Being unlucky of number 13.
- The consecration of Jumada and plants
- Prayer writing by some jobber
- Opening book
- Knowledge sneezing as a sight of waiting
- Considering some animals unlucky (for example it is said that the crow is crossed birds)
- Considering some animals lucky (for example it is said that snake is a lucky animal)
- Not cutting nail in some day
- Not moving in someday
- Pouring boiling water in the ground burn the jinn
- Putting the blood of the victims on the door of the house or cat etc.
- Writing from some particular topic

- Rubbing the black expand on forehead of a body
- Many superstitious about rainbow
- Breaking eggs to relive some eyes.

Again, Kose, et. al. (2015) in his study revealed five factors of superstitious belief and named, such as *lucky behaviors, to teems, bad luck belief, lucky items and ignore*. Sagone and Elvira (2014), in his study mentioned that, there may be a strong link between the holding of superstitions beliefs and the need to cope with the uncontrollability of life also, during the adolescent. Superstitious belief has also been linked with, whether people worry about life, have a strong need for control and do not like ambiguity in their lives. (Vijay, et. al. 2017)

So, there is an urgent need to find out such false believes in the society. The above-mentioned studies also showed that, superstitious believes are influenced by several factors, which need to be identified first. But, for that, the researcher must find out the level of superstitious belief, existing in the society, and academic institutions are the best place to bring awareness to the younger generation, about the negative impact of superstitious believes, from the very beginning. So, in this research paper, an attempt has been made to study about students' tendency to superstition, with special reference to on-campus students and distance learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objectives of the study are:

- To compare the superstitious beliefs of On-Campus students and Distance Learners (KKHSOU Study Center) of Sibsagar College, Joysagar.
- To compare the superstitious beliefs of (a) Boys studying in regular mode and Boys studying in distance mode and (b) Girls studying in regular mode and Girls studying in distance mode of Sibsagar College, Joysagar.
- To compare the superstitious beliefs of (a) Urban On-Campus Students and Urban Distance learners and (b) Rural On-Campus Students and Rural Distance Learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar.
- To compare the On-Campus students and Distance Learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar of different caste viz., (a) Scheduled Caste (SC), (b) Scheduled Tribe (ST), (c) Other Backward Classes (OBC), and (d) General (GEN)

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The major hypotheses of the study are:

- There is no significant difference between On-Campus students and Distance Learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, as far as their superstitious belief is concerned.
- There is no significant difference between of (a) Boys studying in regular mode and Boys studying in distance mode and (b) Girls studying in regular mode and Girls studying in distance mode of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, as far as their superstitious belief is concerned.
- There is no significant difference between (a) Urban On-Campus Students and Urban Distance learners and (b) Rural on-Campus Students and Rural Distance Learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, as far as their superstitious belief is concerned.

- There is no significant difference between On-Campus students and Distance Learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar of different caste viz., (a) Scheduled Caste (SC), (b) Scheduled Tribe (ST), (c) Other Backward Classes (OBC), and (d) General (GEN) as far as their superstitious belief is concerned.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Methods Used: The nature of the data collected to test the hypotheses demand normative survey method. Hence, Normative Survey method is used in the present study.

Sample: From the session of 2017-2018, total 398 students were selected through incidental sampling technique. Out of these 398 students, 231 students (152 girls and 79 boys), were studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar through regular mode and 167 students (112 girls and 55 boys) were studying in KKHSOU study centre of Sibsagar college, Joysagar, through distance mode. The samples were further subdivided, under the following headings.

Urban On Campus Students	Urban Distance Learners	Rural On Campus Students	Rural Distance Learners	Gen On-Campus Students	Gen Distance Learners	SC On Campus Students	SC Distance Learners	OBC On Campus Students	OBC Distance Learners	ST On Campus Students	ST Distance Learners
99	57	93	149	13	45	56	76	72	40	68	28

TOOLS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Superstitious Belief Scale: A Superstitious Belief Scale constructed and standardized by the researcher, is used in the study. A Likert type attitude scale consists of 12 statements, that are constructed for the present study. Out of these 12 statements, 5 statements are favorable and 7 statements are unfavorable.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The researcher herself administered the scale, among the students studying through regular mode, when the college was open in sessions. The researcher visited the KKHSOU study center in Sundays and distributed the superstitious belief scale, to the students studying in distance mode and collected the required data. Necessary oral instructions were given to the students, studying under both regular mode and distance mode, for giving their opinion against each statement carefully. Copying was strictly prohibited. When the students finished answering, the filled in forms were collected.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

To compare the superstitious beliefs of on-campus students and distance learners, 't' test was used. The following table showed the comparison between On-Campus students and distance learners, studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar.

Table 1

Categories	N	Dimension	Mean	SD	t	Df	Significance
On-Campus Students	231	Aversion to Superstitions	41.56	18.19	12.33	396	Significant at.01 level
Distance Learners	167	Aversion to Superstitions	22.89	11.63			

Comparison between On-Campus Students and Distance Learners with respect to their Superstitious Beliefs

For testing, if there is any significant difference between On-Campus students studying under regular mode and distance learners, with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions', the null hypothesis was formulated as; **"There is no significant difference between On-Campus students studying under regular mode and distance learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions"**. The 't' value is found to be 12.33, which is significant at .01 level. Hence, the null hypotheses could be rejected at .01 level of significance (Table value=2.58). Thus, there is a significant difference between On-Campus students studying under regular mode and distance learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions'. The mean score (41.56) obtained by the on-campus students on the dimension, 'Aversion to superstitions is greater than the mean score (22.89), obtained by the distance learners studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar.

Table 2

Categories	N	Dimension	Mean	SD	t	Df	Significance
Boys Studying in Regular Mode	79	Aversion to Superstitions	38.13	13.30	4.22	132	significant at.01 level
Boys Studying in Distance mode	55	Aversion to Superstitions	32.22	11.11			

Comparison between Boys Studying in Regular Mode and Boys Studying in Distance Mode with respect to their Superstitious Beliefs

To test if there is any significant difference between boys, studying in regular mode and boys studying in distance mode, with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions', the null hypothesis was formulated as; **"There is no significant difference between boys studying in regular mode and boys studying in distance mode of Sibsagar College, Joysagar with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions"**. The 't' value is found to be 4.22 which is significant at .01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis could be rejected at .01 level of significance (Table value=2.58). Thus, there is significant difference between boys studying in regular mode and boys studying in distance mode, with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions'. The mean score obtained by the boys studying in regular mode (38.13) is greater than the mean score (32.22), obtained by the boys studying in distance mode of Sibsagar college, Joysagar.

Table 3

Categories	N	Dimension	Mean	SD	t	Df	Significance
Gils Studying in Regular Mode	152	Aversion to Superstitions	25.33	19.18	3.45	262	significant at.01 level
Girls studying in Distance mode	112	Aversion to Superstitions	28.99	14.34			

Comparison between Girls Studying in Regular mode and Girls Studying in Distance Mode with respect to their Superstitious Beliefs

To test if there is any significant difference between girls studying in regular mode and girls studying in distance mode, with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions', the null hypothesis was formulated as; **"There is no significant difference between girls studying in regular mode and girls studying in distance mode of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions"**. The 't' value is found to be 3.45, which is significant at .01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis could be rejected at .01 level of significance (Table value=2.58). Thus, there is a significant difference between girls studying in regular mode and girls studying in distance mode, with

respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions'. The mean score obtained by the girls studying in distance mode (28.99) is greater than the mean score (25.33), obtained by the girls studying in regular mode of Sibsagar college, Joysagar.

Table 4

Categories	N	Dimension	Mean	SD	T	Df	Significance
UrbanOn Campus Students	99	Aversion to Superstitions	48.89	33.33	11.17	154	Significant at.01 level
Urban Distance Learners	57	Aversion to Superstitions	31.16	15.33			

Comparison between Urban On-Campus Students and Urban Distance Learners with respect to their Superstitious Beliefs

To test if there is any significant difference between Urban On-Campus students, studying under regular mode and Urban distance learners, with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions', the null hypothesis was formulated as; **"There is no significant difference between Urban On-Campus students studying under regular mode and Urban distance learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions"**. The 't' value is found to be 11.17, which is highly significant at .01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis could be rejected at .01 level of significance (Table value=2.58). Thus, there is a significant difference between Urban On-Campus students studying under regular mode and Urban distance learners with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions'. It is clear from the Table: 4 that, the urban on-campus students obtained higher mean score (48.89), with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions' than urban distance learners (31.16), studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar.

Table 5

Categories	N	Dimension	Mean	SD	t	Df	Significance
RuralOn Campus Students	93	Aversion to Superstitions	21.22	14.89	1.398	240	Not significant at.05 level
Rural Distance Learners	149	Aversion to Superstitions	13.17	17.65			

Comparison between Rural On-Campus Students and Rural Distance Learners, with respect to their Superstitious Beliefs

To test, if there is any significant difference between Rural On-Campus students, studying under regular mode and Rural distance learners, with respect to the dimension, 'Aversion to Superstitions', the null hypothesis was formulated as; **"There is no significant difference between Rural On-Campus students, studying under regular mode and Rural distance learners of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions"**. The 't' value is found to be 1.398 which is not significant at.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis could be accepted at.05 level of significance (Table value=2.58). Thus, there is no significant difference between Rural On-Campus students studying under regular mode and Rural distance learners with respect to the dimension 'Aversion to Superstitions'.

Table 6

Categories	N	Dimension	Mean	SD	t	Df	Significance
GENOn Campus Students	13	Aversion to Superstitions	32.24	12.22	0.56	56	Not significant at.05 Level
GEN Distance Learners	45	Aversion to Superstitions	32.67	12.61			

Table 6: Contd.,							
SC On Campus Students	56	Aversion to Superstitions	28.06	13.45	.077	130	Not Significant at.05 Level
SC Distance Learners	76	Aversion to Superstitions	25.02	18.98			
OBC On Campus Students	72	Aversion to Superstitions	48.19	16.20	4.68	110	Significant at.01 Level
OBC Distance Learners	40	Aversion to Superstitions	34.24	19.88			
ST On Campus Students	68	Aversion to Superstitions	22.76	11.16	0.22	94	Not Significant at.05 Level
ST Distance Learners	28	Aversion to Superstitions	19.02	13.98			

Caste Wise Comparison between On-Campus Students and Distance Learners with respect to their Superstitious Beliefs

The following null hypothesis was formulated for testing if there is any significant difference between GEN On-campus students and GEN distance learners studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar, with respect to the dimension 'Aversion to Superstitions'; **"There is no significant difference between GEN On-campus students and GEN distance learners, studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar, with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions"**. The 't' value is found to be 0.56, which is not significant at .05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis could be accepted at.05 level of significance (Table value=1.97). Thus, there is no significant difference between GEN On-campus students and GEN distance learners studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar with respect to the dimension 'Aversion to Superstitions'.

To test, if there is any significant difference between SC On-campus students and SC distance learners studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar with respect to the dimension 'Aversion to Superstitions', the null hypotheses was formulated as; **"There is no significant difference between SC On-campus students and SC distance learners studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar, with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions"**. The 't' value is found to be.077 which is not significant at .05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis could be accepted at .05 level of significance (Table value=1.97). Thus, there is no significant difference between SC On-campus students and SC distance learners studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar with respect to the dimension 'Aversion to Superstitions'.

The following null hypothesis was formulated for testing if there is any significant difference between OBC On-campus students and OBC distance learners studying in Sibsagar college, with respect to the dimension 'Aversion to Superstitions'; **"There is no significant difference between OBC On-campus students and OBC distance learners studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions"**. The 't' value is found to be 4.68 which is significant at .01 level. Hence, the null hypotheses could be rejected at.01 level of significance (Table value=2.59). Thus, there is a significant difference between OBC On-campus students and OBC distance learners studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions. It is clear from the Table: 6 that, the mean score (48.19) obtained by the OBC On-campus students, with respect to the dimension 'Aversion to Superstitions' is higher than the mean score (34.24) obtained by the OBC distance learners, studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar.

To examine if there is any significant difference between ST On-campus students and ST distance learners studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar with respect to the dimension 'Aversion to Superstitions', the null hypotheses was

formulated as; “There is no significant difference between ST On-campus students and ST distance learners studying in Sibsagar college, Joysagar with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions”. The ‘t’ value is found to be 0.22, which is not significant at .05 level. Hence, the null hypotheses could be accepted at .05 level of significance (Table value=1.97). Thus, there is no significant difference between ST On-campus learners and ST distance learners studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar with respect to the dimension aversion to superstitions.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of the study are –

- There was a significant difference between on-campus students and distance learners studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar, as far as their superstitious belief is concerned.
- A significant difference was observed between boys studying in regular mode and the boys studying in distance mode of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, as far as their superstitious belief is concerned.
- A significant difference was also observed between girls studying in regular mode and girls studying in distance mode of Sibsagar College, Joysagar, as far as their superstitious belief is concerned.
- The present study had revealed a significant difference between (a) Urban On –Campus students and Urban distance learners as far as their superstitious belief is concerned. However, no such difference was observed between Rural On-Campus students and Rural Distance learners, as far as their superstitious believe is concerned.
- There was a significant difference between OBC On-Campus students and OBC Distance Learners studying in Sibsagar College, Joysagar, as far as their superstitious belief is concerned. However, no such difference was observed between (a) GEN On-Campus students and GEN distance learners (b) SC On-Campus students and SC distance learners and (c) and ST On-Campus students and ST distance learners as far as their tendency towards superstitions is concerned.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study had revealed a significant difference between on-campus students and distance learners (gender wise, locality wise and caste wise) with respect to their superstitious beliefs. In agreement with the findings of the present study, Ebert (1946) found that, the girls did slightly better than the boys on the superstitious test. In a similar study, again it was found that women are more superstitious than men (Torgler, 2003). There is a mean difference between male and female false beliefs (Ebrahimizad, 2014). Girls expressed belief in a greater number of superstitions than boys (Maller and Lundeen, 1933). Vijay, et. al. (2017) in their study also revealed that, the superstitious beliefs are higher among woman, people with lower intellectual level, lower socio-economic status and rural community. Considering all these points, it is suggested that, proper scientific attitude in the form of rationality, curiosity, open mindedness, aversion to superstition, objectivity in thinking and suspended judgment must be developed in the younger generation. Only then, we can think about more developed, modernized and progressed India.

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